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1. Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC), which is part of the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District and the National Wildlife Refuge System, all managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. You are receiving our **first** electronic mailing for educators because you previously indicated an interest in the PWLC. We hope to keep in touch with you while saving paper, trees, time, and funds. We will no longer be sending postal mailings. If you know of other educators who may be interested in receiving this periodic mailing, we welcome you to forward this message to them or ask them to send an email to prairiewet@fws.gov with their name, school district, grade level(s), subjects, and city/state. Of course we also welcome your feedback anytime. If there is something in particular that you would like us to share, please let us know.

2. PWLC News and Events for Educators

- **New Winter Programs for High Schools** - PWLC staff are planning to offer two new, winter, off-site classroom presentations for high school students on geology of the prairie pothole region and careers. If you would like to provide input on the lesson plans during the next month or so, please send us an email at prairiewet@fws.gov. We'll send out additional publicity to everyone later in the fall. These new programs are part of an on-going curriculum revision which is now underway and will include offering seasonal programs by grade level which help support current MN graduation standards.
- **Prairie Science Class award** - The Prairie Science Class will be honored at the Minnesota Rural Education Association's annual fall conference in Alexandria, MN Oct. 26-28. The PSC will receive the 2nd place Award of Distinction in the Profiles of Excellence competition as an outdoor classroom and the innovative way the PSC engages students in learning. The competition recognizes school districts that have outstanding programs that engage both students and the community. Seventeen entries were received. This is the first time in the award's history that Fergus Falls placed near the top. Congratulations to the PSC!
- **Volunteer Training** - The PWLC will be hosting a special volunteer training Monday, October 17, 9:30 am - 2:00 pm, for those who would like to assist with field trips and the Prairie Science Class. Please contact laura_bonneau@fws.gov to sign up. You will be provided with environmental education info, tips for the trails, and the opportunity to go out in the field with the Prairie Science Class that day.
- **Roger That!** -- If you have already scheduled your fall field trip to the PWLC, you may have noticed that we are confirming your booking with a follow-up email message in a consistent format. One employee assigned as the lead contact person for your group sends the e-confirmation and is glad to work out further details or answer any questions you may have about your arrangements. In an effort to improve our customer service and the quality of our educational programs, more PWLC staff are assigned to each larger group than in the past to each field trip. We are also providing teachers with a short evaluation form to complete after the field trip and return to us so we can further improve our programs. Thank you very much to all of you who have responded and returned your evaluations already. We are experiencing a high rate of return thanks to you!

- **Migrating Monarch** -- Walk-in visitors and school groups tagged about 400 monarch butterflies at the PWLC. What a great fall for monarchs! Thank you for helping us conserve these amazing migratory insects.
- **Minnesota Federal Junior Duck Stamp Art Display** -- Check out the winning K-12th grade artwork on display through October in the PWLC visitor center. This year, 686 Minnesota youngsters participated in this conservation-through-the-arts program. The Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program is designed to teach students about waterfowl and their habitat through an art and science-based curriculum. The program is available to all children in grades K-12. It is modeled after the Federal Duck Stamp Program and gives students an opportunity to create a design for a stamp. The art which is selected as the National Winner serves as the design for the Junior Duck Stamp. The stamp sells for \$5.00 and is considered a collectable. The painting must be of a North American duck, goose, or swan. This exhibit displays photocopies of the student's original artwork. For more information about Junior Duck Stamps, click on this website: <http://duckstamps.fws.gov>. To obtain information about participating in the 2005-2006 Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program in Minnesota, contact Mara Lundeen at 952-858-0710.
- **Fall Festival** -- Join us Saturday, October 15, 12 noon - 4 pm, in our annual autumn celebration here at the PWLC! You can learn more about Silent Shadows of the Night, Sleeping Salamanders, Skeleton Keys, Spinning Spiders, and much more! Bring your own pumpkin to paint, participate in a scavenger hunt, and enjoy refreshments.
- **Service Learning Opportunities** - We welcome you and your students to make a difference for wildlife and habitat as responsible citizens. At the PWLC, you can still help us harvest fall prairie seeds, weed the butterfly garden trail, or be a weed warrior and remove trees from the prairie. And of course we offer a variety of educational programs as outlined on our web site at www.fws.gov/midwest/pwlc. Give us a call at 218-736-0938 to schedule your next visit.
- The PWLC visitor center and office will be closed on Monday, October 10, as **Columbus Day** is a federal holiday.

3. Other EE Curricula and Events

Goldman Environmental Ethics Curriculum

A new educational resource focused on getting kids to understand how their decisions and opinions impact the environment. It has been developed by The Goldman Prize, with a group of prize winners serving as examples of how regular people choose to take a stand against environmental degradation in their communities. It has been ENDORSED BY 24 OF THE NATION'S TOP EDUCATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS including EARTH DAY NETWORK, as well as individual teachers across the U.S. who tested it in their own classrooms earlier this year. The curriculum is geared specifically toward high school students, but may be adapted for use with middle school and university students, as well. It brings up interesting questions about how to weigh the needs of modern society with the need to protect the natural world and thus could also work in an adult workshop setting.

The curriculum consists of a seven part, 60 minute video series on DVD or VHS that introduces concepts in environmental ethics through profiles of select Goldman Prize recipients from around the world. View an on-line video trailer at <http://envethics.org/curriculum/overview> Check out www.envethics.org to learn more and to purchase the curriculum.

You Can Recycle

The Keystone Center and Can Manufacturers Institute teamed up in 2004 to create a packet of lesson plans focusing on aluminum can recycling. *Talkin' Trash with ABCs* is designed for middle level students (grades 6-9). Lessons are aligned to National Education Standards and include all of the necessary student sheets and information to easily implement in your classroom. The

lesson packet is designed to act as a unit or as stand alone activities. The curriculum packet is free and available in its entirety on-line at: www.cancentral.com. Click on the *Talkin' Trash with ABCs* link and you will have access to the lessons. Additionally, you can call 1-888-cancentral (226-2368) for more information.

5-Minute Field Trips

An online resource called Teaching About Nature in Your Schoolyard provides a variety of short classic EE activities that will help your students explore their surroundings through awareness, connections, and action. The address is www.cpawscalgary.org/education/pdf/5min-fieldtrips.pdf

"America's Rain Forests: A Distance Learning Adventure"

October 14, 2005, 1:00 -2:30 p.m. EST. Rain forests provide a haven for the largest diversity of plants and animals on Earth. Join experts in Puerto Rico and Alaska during a FREE, LIVE ELECTRONIC FIELD TRIP and explore America's tropical and temperate rain forests. Tune in on October 14, 2005 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. ET and join students, teachers, biologists and researchers on an electronic field trip to the Caribbean National Forest in Puerto Rico and the Tongass National Forest in Alaska. The program will be broadcast LIVE by satellite and web cast on the Internet at <http://rainforests.pwnet.org>. A video will be broadcast and web cast on September 30 from 1-2 p.m. ET to introduce students to these fascinating ecosystems. Check the web site for details. Check out <http://rainforests.pwnet.org> for background information about rain forests, free lesson plans, and scheduled live chats.

The nonprofit Tread Lightly! ® has just gone live with its interactive kids' site—www.treadlightlykids.org. The site is part of the organization's raised efforts to teach outdoor ethics to a growing number of kids recreating with vehicles like dirt bikes and ATVs. The site features Tread Lightly!'s squirrel mascot, Lightfoot™, and several of his animal friends. From the colorful homepage, kids can click on to an outdoor quiz, ATV trail maze, hiking checklist, a story builder and coloring pages with crayons. Each section also contains helpful tips to be responsible such as— "keep your feet, bikes and ATVs on the trails" and "wash your bike and clothes after every trip so you don't spread weed seeds." Tread Lightly! is also making available a "Youth Outreach Kit" to government agencies, educators, and other organizations to download from the site. The printable kit includes pledge cards, a kids' principles sheet, a poster, kids' web banners and coloring book pages.

4. EE Grants

Starbucks Foundation Environmental Literacy Program

The Starbucks Foundation, a corporate leader in the environmental community, has initiated an environmental literacy program that provides funding to innovative local projects. The foundation seeks out programs that give young people new ways of thinking and acting, and empower them to become "heroes for a sustainable environment in their own communities." Funding may be sought not only by nonprofit organizations, but also by public schools and libraries. For more information on the program, visit the Starbucks Foundation website: <http://www.starbucks.com/aboutus/grantinfo.as>.

Outdoor Classrooms

Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation, International Paper and National Geographic Explorer! classroom magazine are offering this outdoor classroom grant program to help schools improve their science curriculum by engaging students in hands-on experiences outside the traditional classroom. This Grant program is for outdoor classroom proposals by K-12 public schools in the United States. Grants up to \$2,000 will be awarded to at least 100 schools and grants for up to \$20,000 may be awarded to schools or school districts with major outdoor classroom projects. Proposals are reviewed three times a year.

<http://www.Lowes.com/outdoorclassroom>

5. Unsubscribe

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, email a message to prairiewet@fws.gov with "unsubscribe PWLC" in the subject line.

Happy Trails! From the PWLC Staff

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The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants for the continuing benefit of the American people.